

FOREST SPOTLIGHT

Pacific Northwest Region – Malheur NF

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/malheur/>

Game Attractants Cause Trouble

Please help us better manage your National Forest by not placing salt within one-quarter mile of water sources.

Often hunters use salt blocks or artificial water holes on the Malheur National Forest to lure animals to a specific area. This activity can cause degraded water quality, damage to aquatic species, decreased forage production and sterilization of the ground.



Salt blocks (one in the stream) and a mineral feed block affecting riparian vegetation and water quality in the stream.

Water sources attract wildlife for obvious reasons. Some hunters scouting for an upcoming season locate game cameras in these areas. When a salt block is used, it also concentrates permitted cattle from that Forest allotment.



Several years of salting at a spring created a hole in the ground, no vegetation and contaminated soil with runoff into the dammed spring.

Even after the salt is removed the residue contaminates the soil and continues to leach into the water having negative effects on aquatic species and plant life.

Ranchers grazing cattle on the Forest are required to locate salt at least one-quarter mile from water sources.



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“Malheur National Forest livestock grazing permittees use salt placement as a tool to distribute their cattle to upland vegetation,” said Forest Range Program Manager, Ernie Gipson. “Leaving salt near water sources causes cattle to stay longer and over utilize important riparian vegetation.”

Hunting Structures

There have also been issues with water troughs used to attract game in dryer areas of the Forest. These too draw cattle and other wildlife to fragile areas. Smaller animals often drown in these as well. Forest Service water guzzlers are required to have escape structures built in to guard against drowning small animals.



Homemade guzzler/water tank



Makeshift tree stand over a water source

Cameras, tree stands and other structures are often found on the Malheur National Forest. As long as they are temporary and not causing damage to the tree or other resources, they will not be disturbed by law enforcement officers. When more permanent wooden structures are built, the nails and spikes used cause damage to the tree and could pose a risk to sawyers and mill equipment.

“We do not want to over regulate these activities,” said Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer, Aaron Henrichs. “We hope folks recognize and try to help manage these issues.”

Forest Supervisor, Teresa Raaf said, “The Malheur National Forest really appreciates all the support we get from the community, and we just want to ask for your help in this matter.”



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